

# **Speak to the Clouds**

**Laurette Tanner**

Speak To The Clouds

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## Contents

EARTH	1
PLUMS	2
CHILDS PLAY	3
ODE TO THE POETS	4
SPEAK TO THE CLOUDS	5
GREY RAIN	6
DON'T CRY, BABY	7
THE DISCOUNT MAP	8
A VOICE	9
ANCIENT	10
CHANGE PATTERNS	11
NEEDS	12
QUIT	13
AT THE END	14
GUITAR	15
SOLITUDE	16
BRIDGE	17
SONG	18
TREES	19
LONG AGO WAS A WISE MAN	20
INK	21
LIBRA	22
THE GARDEN	23

LOOKING BACK	24
SATIRE	25
TIME	26
THE CLEANERS	27
OUR LOVE	28
TO LOREN FROM LORRY	29
ANIMALS	30
XEROX	31
OH, WHAT CARELESS TOUCHING	32
THE VIRGIN WHORE	33
A SLICE OF LIFE	34
ARCHETYPE	35
GRIEF	36
FOR PETER	37
WITHOUT	38
I WISH YOU THANKS FOR THE WISE WORDS	39
LIFE	40
THE FAIRY LEAVES	41
MOONGLOW	42
FIRST POEM (AGE 6)	43





## EARTH

You're in love with shadows,  
I'm a woman of earth,  
with the muscles and bones  
and blood to give birth.  
You're a skeleton,  
a puzzle,  
a treasure  
of thought;  
seeking, uneasily  
a love  
that is taught.  
The love we're starting with  
will continue to grow,  
by twinkles in our eyes  
and other ways to know –  
For I gather your shadows  
and substance,  
draw them to me  
and stretch them to fit your frame  
where they should be.

## PLUMS

My love, I love  
your back so tall and strong.  
I like to massage it  
with my fingertips  
as sharply as an ice-pick,  
as gently as a cats lick.  
I like to see your whole frame  
undressed without shame.  
I like to ride your wild horse,  
and sing until my throat is hoarse.  
I like to pick plums together,  
your moving hands  
as soft as feathers.  
With you I like to be undone,  
till we are put back as one.



## CHILDS PLAY

Don't be wistful about tomorrow –  
see the stars up in the sky,  
one day you'll know your answers  
but then you'll wonder why  
dreams were long in coming &  
perhaps then give a sigh,  
for childs play has come to stay  
and wonder to abide.

## ODE TO THE POETS

To the poets  
who are now long since dead,  
that made rhymes in  
ribbons and knots  
with their heads –  
and who have become dust  
as we certainly all must.  
The rhythms live,  
though your reasons are dead –  
because you've left in them  
all you wanted said.

## **SPEAK TO THE CLOUDS**

bring forth their rain –  
then dance in the river  
that heals all your pain.

listen to grass grow  
tall in summer fields –  
hear the sounds of softness,  
allow your love to yield.

test yourself for greatness,  
play wiser games –  
call to the child within you,  
and go safely through the flames.

## GREY RAIN

The rain, washing  
down streets, mirrors  
your eyes far away,  
grey like the rain.  
Your head is turned  
half in shadow, half  
in light. – One  
day I'll sail on  
the grey seas of  
your eyes, and  
dance upon the deck, drunk  
and with a sigh.

## **DON'T CRY, BABY**

I don't know why  
we go to the moon  
when we can't even fly.

If I knew that  
I would know many things;  
Like why God gave us hands  
and gave the birds wings.

## THE DISCOUNT MAP

writing rhymes  
of seasons and reasons  
is a way of charting weather.  
Try to know – somehow –  
when it's going to rain.

Map experience  
and figure the cost.

Nothing is free  
and sometimes half-off.

## A VOICE

Intolerant is he  
who has decided we  
are each a separate voice  
alone, without the choice –  
to bond together hands  
in faith across the lands,  
All religions are the same –  
We but call them different names.

## ANCIENT

I have such power within me,  
She moves her tough, gnarled hands  
to play porpoise in the ocean,  
to build dunes upon the sand.

I've learned my own life,  
says her careful heart.  
I knew time was but a moment  
and the Here and Now is Art.

I knew a tree once as a sapling,  
thinks her ancient mind –  
that I watered through the droughts,  
I thought it to be kind.





## NEEDS

You're not the person I once loved;  
there's nothing in your way or words-  
to show that once upon a time  
we sang like whales and flew like birds.  
There's not a flower on a stem  
or a bough upon a tree  
that does not evoke a tenderness  
or unmake my need.

## QUIT

You great son-of-a-bitch,  
you found me and scratched your itch.  
Now I beg of you to quit.  
You've used me like a horse you'd hit –  
Open mouth, insert the bit.

You use your courage and cocksman  
stance  
to crow over me with an offered chance  
of joining in a marriage dance.  
You think your footing's on solid  
ground,  
but I won't be the bride you've found.

## AT THE END

It's the period at the end of a sentence,  
it's the after-dinner drink,  
it's the pause before a word  
that makes me stop and think.  
It's the way you hold your carriage,  
it's a stumble in my mind,  
that cautions me towards marriage,  
if words are all I find.

## GUITAR

My guitar plays the wind,  
songs played with sleath,  
a treasure in the playing,  
it sings like a thief.  
Words, stolen, rend  
a cloth of ill-repair –  
Then chords gather strength  
and harmony is there.

## SOLITUDE

at dawn I rose,  
all day long painted,  
a scene of mountains  
with a valley painted in.

the phone rang twice,  
once a wrong #,  
the other an invitation  
for a subscription.

it's not that artists  
are islands, afloat  
with palm trees.  
it's that responsible painting  
requires  
solitude of me.

and daylight, where  
mistakes and tone  
really show, so  
i painted the day thru  
'til twilight's gentle glow.  
then night intruded,  
without a stitch of clothes.

## BRIDGE

If you take time to  
write something down,  
pay attention to  
more than how it sounds.  
Your deepest depths, your personal  
tests,  
may be pointed out,  
in a whisper or a shout.  
Your daydreams and nightdreams  
are fodder for  
these sketches written down with effort  
or ease.  
It's quality, not quantity,  
that should result, something  
in which your self can exult –  
something tempered like a bridge made  
of steel,  
something made up,  
something real.

## SONG

Darkness and light  
are two words the same.

One is washed air after a rain,  
the other the starlight in a black night.  
One is pain of things one has seen,  
the other the promise of things  
growing green.

One is the insight that growing  
can bring, and one's a song, my  
song, is sing.



## TREES

If you have only one  
center of calm  
(circle of intent &  
compass of silver,)  
stay among the trees  
for they're not bothered by  
a storm.

## LONG AGO WAS A WISE MAN

He played a waiting game  
for his lovely lady love,  
then one day she came.  
She had dirt under her fingernails  
and live snakes for hair;  
His mouth opened in awe,  
he'd never seen one more fair.  
Well, there is more here than meets the  
eye,  
at least in my mind,  
for the moral of this poem is  
there is beauty in any love we find.

## INK

Write, I said, I think  
to the pen.  
It drew a fine map for  
me in the end.  
Where it had  
been I  
couldn't have  
said, it  
left me at home  
and went on instead.  
It's there to be easily read,  
I think –  
but the damn  
thing wrote in  
invisible ink.

## LIBRA

for every seed, birth;  
every tree, earth;  
every tear, its mirth;  
every scale, its worth.

## THE GARDEN

my love will come, my love  
belongs beside me in my arms  
so strong & sure & lively, too  
it's he alone that i will woo.

see the roses climbing up  
along the garden gate  
so still with color and fragrant dew-  
it's here i sit and wait.

he's sat on this step so  
many times, and waited for my voice  
& now i sit here patiently  
abiding by his choice.

it's spring and now the buds are out,  
i'll leave if he's too late;  
water the garden, walk away  
and leave love up to fate.

## LOOKING BACK

I wish you had seen  
me when I was young-  
with a mind of beauty  
for which songs were sung;  
Hair as fine  
and soft as sand,  
with life poised  
within my hands.  
As my face grew smiles  
through years of love  
and grew out of sadness  
from sorrow my tears  
turned into knowledge learned.  
Where once had been wonder,  
where once had been grace –  
The first became knowledge,  
the second, old lace.

## SATIRE

at the opening of silence  
the critics stood in  
ecstatic ovation.

when the savior arrived,  
the brave fled, the foolish  
knelt.

at the closing of death,  
all concerned said a  
prayer.

when silence stood up,  
it let out a great  
burp.

## TIME

Time comes,  
time goes –  
but where it is  
nobody knows.

Every day, every hour  
we are busy living lives,  
being good mothers,  
being great wives.

It's gone in a second &  
it comes in a blink,  
but it's there whenever  
we have a second to think.

All these special moments  
that go to make up time  
all make them ours,  
and so make them mine.



## THE CLEANERS

They're asking for a ransom  
and they've done it every time  
so I've mortgaged myself to  
a dinner of bread, cheese and wine.  
They're holding my clothes hostage,  
all for seven dollars, they say.  
I'd rather get them later, but  
the ticket says today.  
What the heck-  
It does not expensive  
when I've nothing left to wear,  
because how can I go to work  
when my little butt is bare.

## OUR LOVE

You are my friend,  
you are my lover  
both out of and  
under the covers.  
when I'm with you  
i rejoice  
that we are each  
other's choice.  
with you I dance,  
for you I sing  
in the pleasure that  
your company brings.  
with a simple thing  
like a hand outstretched  
in  
my heart our love is etched.

**TO LOREN FROM LORRY**

I've loved a man while rain came  
from the sky; I thought  
him a shaman as  
I looked into his eyes. I  
feel him sometimes  
out there where  
I see birds go by.  
I close my eyes,  
relax my mind, and  
in my own way, fly.

## ANIMALS

He was dressed all in leather,  
and his glance touched me  
like a feather.  
It said, "will you  
follow me home tonight  
and see my mask by candlelight?  
I'll strip myself before your gaze  
& lick your nose in the smoky haze.  
Will you explore the smooth skin  
that's in a secret place?  
Will you do everything humanly  
possible to become a member  
of the animal race?"

## XEROX

seeing your eyes on strangers' faces  
greeting/cards and photographs  
evokes stimulus/response wetness  
seeps between my legs/as sparkling  
eyes brown sugar shine flicker/  
vanish/please pass the wine.

## II

yes, yes, the river knows  
so Xerox a smile.  
polish your toes.  
we'll meet again  
where the four winds blow.

## OH, WHAT CARELESS TOUCHING

that dances us apart.  
We are young, and thoughts  
are strong, but we have  
fragile hearts.  
Oh, what a noble profile  
that can't not revile  
a moment of a life.  
Oh, what odd qualities we search for  
in a husband or a wife.

## THE VIRGIN WHORE

My love is a virgin, my love is a whore-  
One I loathe, and one I adore  
I'm betwixt and bewildered  
I'm bothered beyond reason  
because my mind says one thing  
and my cock plays treason.  
I love the maiden in shining white;  
I love the woman in flaming red,  
and when she dances in the dark of  
night  
I tend to nobly lose my head.  
Trying to love the two,  
I've tried to love none-  
I'm seeking an ideal,  
in which they are one.

## A SLICE OF LIFE

Everybody likes pizza...  
It goes well with the blues,  
like baby shoes.  
Bronze them when you're through  
eating out the shoelaces  
and peeking through the pepperoni:

Looking for any soul that's been stole,  
that's wandering around today on 6 inch  
heels.

A good baby now a bad woman,  
she may be a hooker but she's human  
and when she smiles the harmonica cries  
the way her passion does, it lies

right in the laps of those who buy.  
Yes, we all have hard lives, but  
do we get ours delivered? By a pimp?  
No, it's the pizza man with our take-out  
order.



## ARCHETYPE

I cast for you,

you break out of an archetype,  
a set role, a stereotype  
We know  
love; we've known none.

You take my hand and run  
along to make daisies of my heart  
in a field. Laughing, we sit;  
talking, we yield.

You are the sun shining in your magnif-  
icence  
I cast for your smiling face since  
you're the sun whose fire burned  
secrets only  
wood could learn.

## GRIEF

This is the crying that comes  
without tears,  
when raw feeling is left,  
numb in your breast.

this is the mourning , until it  
abates, these are the mourners,  
in grief at the wake.

here is feeling that lives on  
in vain,  
'til tears pass by  
and there is no more pain.

## FOR PETER

I'm looking straight ahead  
as things go through my mind.  
Tears weren't what you wished for me,  
Your thoughts were always kind.

## II

I saw you looking longingly  
perhaps I misread your simple glance –  
at the same instant we looked away  
as if by choice; it was but chance.

I'm filling in the pieces  
before time dims what I see,  
although I know we never happened  
and that we can never be.

## WITHOUT

Like a bottle, hollow  
with nothing to swallow;  
A paragon of virtue,  
a nest of emptiness –  
My mind feels nothing  
when you touch my breast.  
I'm a vase with no flowers,  
a mouth with no tongue  
to burst forth in beauty  
with tenderness sung.

I'm a portion of sky where no breeze  
can stir, a moment of silence  
when deafness occurs.

Like a rock on a hillside  
clinging to the sun,  
we too stay separate  
when we become one.  
What kind of experience  
can I hold in my hands,  
when ashes I have, to  
build castles of sand.

**I WISH YOU THANKS  
FOR THE WISE WORDS**

that whispered touch  
the fragrant leaves.

So, now begin – pull away from me,  
a bird flying readily  
over our once barren earth  
where plants have gone to seed.  
Go – plant other ground  
to fill with other needs.

## LIFE

A flowing of love,  
a feeling that's clear  
that speaks to us of  
how to get there from here.  
A loving, tender feeling  
for a special sound  
that gets distant away  
and comes back around,  
a gentle touch  
that feels of a breeze,  
whistling & stirring like  
the sound of the trees.

## THE FAIRY LEAVES

You can see a tree  
and not be amazed;  
See a leaf  
and be almost dazed  
from infinite beauty in unique forms,  
blown about by autumn's storms.  
The colors fade when leaves are brittle,  
but, in the sun they really glitter.

Think  
they wait for winter snows  
to be wrapped around as winter clothes  
by the fairies that made these leaves,  
bedazzling us with gifts like these.

## MOONGLOW

I watch the moon change  
its shape at night,  
A glowing orb of mystic light  
ever changing through a starry sky;  
a lantern circling Earth up high –  
the oldest glow that's known to Man,  
a wondrous show, that since began  
has brought forth milky-shadows  
in a collage of night-  
which give to the darkness  
a reflection of light.



## FIRST POEM (AGE 6)

I lay in bed  
looking at the stars  
thinking of buses  
and all kinds of cars.  
I think about the growth  
of this Earth,  
of living, of dying and also of birth.  
I lay in bed thinking  
of all Man has made,  
that it all started out  
with Man in a cave.

